

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 4

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Governor's Office of Planning &amp; Research

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**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

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Patrick Streeter, Senior Planner  
City of Santa Rosa, Planning Division  
100 Santa Rosa Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

**Downtown Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan – Notice of Preparation (NOP)**

Dear Patrick Streeter:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Downtown Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan. We are committed to ensuring that impacts to the State's multimodal transportation system and to our natural environment are identified and mitigated to support a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system. The following comments are based on our review of the December 2019 NOP.

***Project Understanding***

The proposed plan is an update to the 2007 Downtown Station Area Specific Plan intended to streamline and simplify the regulatory framework, facilitate development consistent with the community vision for the planning area, and update development standards and design guidelines to promote vibrant, livable environments downtown. The planning area covers approximately 720 acres surrounding the Downtown Santa Rosa Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) Station in the heart of the Santa Rosa (City). The planning area extends approximately one-half mile in all directions from the station. As part of the proposed update, the boundaries of the 2007 planning area have been expanded east to encompass an additional 70 acres between E Street and Brookwood Avenue, consistent with the eastern boundary of the downtown area as described in the Santa Rosa General Plan. The planning area has also been designated a Priority Development Area (PDA), one of five PDAs in Santa Rosa established by the City to provide opportunities for compact, infill development in proximity to transit, jobs, schools, shopping and services. The

*“Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability”*

planning area encompasses US-101 and State Route (SR)-12.

### **Operations Analysis**

Please submit an updated travel demand analysis that includes traffic data to reflect the current year (3 years within the submittal date) as well as the future 20 years after completion of construction. This includes updates to Figures 4.12.2, 4.12.3, 4.12.10, and 4.12.11 from the 2007 DEIR.

With respect to the local and regional roadway system, provide project related trip generation, distribution, and assignment estimates. To ensure that queue formation does not create traffic conflicts, the project-generated trips should be added to the existing, future and cumulative scenario traffic volumes for the Sixth Street/Davis Street-US 101 North off-ramp. Note that the 21 intersections evaluated in the 2007 Draft Environmental Document should still be included. Potential queuing issues should be evaluated including on-ramp storage capacity and analysis of freeway segments near the project. Additionally, turning movements should be evaluated. While conducting these evaluations, it is necessary to use demand volumes rather than output volumes or constrained flow volume.

### **System Planning**

Consider transit connectivity enhancements around the US-101 and SR-12 interchange area to the SMART Station and Transit Mall, as well as the subareas of Maxwell Court and Roberts Avenue. This could be achieved by adding bicycle and pedestrian improvements and connections, as well as increasing the frequency of public transit service.

Additionally, the Santa Rosa SMART Station is located in an area that could benefit from additional pedestrian infrastructure. Caltrans recommends improving the pedestrian environment in the area to enhance safety and encourage walking. This in turn would reduce parking impacts and congestion.

### **Vehicle Trip Reduction**

Given the place, type and size of the planning area, it should include a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions. Such measures are critical to facilitating efficient site access. The measures listed below can promote smart mobility and reduce regional VMT.

- Project design to encourage walking, bicycling and transit access;
- Transit and trip planning resources such as a commute information kiosk;

- Real-time transit information system;
- Ten percent vehicle parking reductions;
- Incorporating affordable housing into the project.
- Charging stations and designated parking spaces for electric vehicles;
- Carpool and clean-fuel parking spaces;
- Designated parking spaces for a car share program;
- Unbundled parking;
- Emergency Ride Home program;
- Secured bicycle storage facilities;
- Fix-it bicycle repair station(s);
- Bicycle route mapping resources;
- Participation/Formation in/of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) in partnership with other developments in the area; and
- Aggressive trip reduction targets with Lead Agency monitoring and enforcement.

Transportation Demand Management programs should be documented with annual monitoring reports by a TDM coordinator to demonstrate effectiveness. If the project does not achieve the VMT reduction goals, the reports should also include next steps to take to achieve those targets. Also, reducing parking supply can encourage active forms of transportation, reduce regional VMT, and lessen future transportation impacts on State facilities.

For additional TDM options, please refer to the Federal Highway Administration's *Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference* (Chapter 8). The reference is available online at: <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/fhwahop12035.pdf>.

### **Transportation Impact Fees**

We encourage a sufficient allocation of fair share contributions toward multimodal and regional transit improvements to fully mitigate cumulative impacts to regional transportation. We also strongly support measures to increase sustainable mode shares, thereby reducing VMT. Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to work with the City and local partners to secure the funding for needed mitigation. Traffic mitigation or cooperative agreements are examples of such measures.

### **Caltrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Efforts**

The Plan identifies a proposed pedestrian and bicycle connection along Fourth Street. Please identify in text and graphics the proposed improvements for the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks. The City should estimate the cost of

needed improvements, expansion, and maintenance for the Plan area, as well as identify viable sources of funding, correlated with the pace of improvements, and a scheduled plan for implementation.

Note that the Caltrans District 4 Bike Plan is currently proposing intersection improvements (with high priority) at College Avenue/US-101 and Steele Lane/US-101. Additionally, the D4 Bike Plan proposes intersection improvements (with mid-priority) at Brookwood Avenue/SR-12, Santa Rosa Avenue/SR-12, and 3rd Street /US-101. Also identified with high priority in the Bike Plan is a separated crossing at Bear Cub Way/US-101. The Caltrans District 4 Bike Plan can be accessed at:

<https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=91f1bb4eb7ff418092977b762b459d01>

As part of District 4's initial effort towards our Pedestrian Plan, Caltrans has requested feedback on pedestrian concerns through the UC Berkeley app Street Story. Caltrans recommends reviewing comments recently noted by the public in Street Story as part of the District 4 Pedestrian Plan initial outreach. Street Story can be accessed at: <https://streetstory.berkeley.edu/>

### **Lead Agency**

As the Lead Agency, the City is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the State Transportation Network (STN). The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

### **Encroachment Permit**

Please be advised that any work or traffic control that encroaches onto the State right-of-way (ROW) requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. To obtain an encroachment permit, a completed encroachment permit application, environmental documentation, six (6) sets of plans clearly indicating the State ROW, and six (6) copies of signed, dated and stamped (include stamp expiration date) traffic control plans must be submitted to: Office of Encroachment Permits, California DOT, District 4, P.O. Box 23660, Oakland, CA 94623-0660. To download the permit application and obtain more information, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

Patrick Streeter, Senior Planner  
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Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Andrew Chan at 510-622-5433 or [andrew.chan@dot.ca.gov](mailto:andrew.chan@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Mark Leong  
District Branch Chief  
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse